

Appendix 1

Proposed Changes to Post 16 School Transport: Report of Consultation 2017

Introduction and methodology

Background

Local authorities are only required to provide free home to school transport to pupils of compulsory school age (between 5-16 years) in specific circumstances, for example where the travelling distance exceeds the national statutory limit or is unsafe to walk.

There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school transport for pupils aged over 16 years old.

Under the current Swindon Borough Council policy, there is a discrepancy between how all pupils in post 16 education are supported:

- Mainstream children attending a 6th form or College are eligible for a subsidised bus pass that currently requires a contribution of up to £450 from parents/carers.
- Pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that require transport, currently receive that free of charge to the chosen special school 6th form or College.

In the 2016/17 academic year, the 16 to 19 age population of Swindon is 21,700. However the majority of these young people have made their own travel arrangements for education, as for many, there are better alternatives to the Council's scheme. Just 27 (0.1%) of the mainstream post 16 population took up discretionary subsidised transport assistance through the Council's policy.

Proposal

In April 2017 the Council approved the conduct of a consultation during May and June 2017 on the proposed Education Transport Policy 2018/19 including:

- To remove automatic discretionary subsidised support for pupils accessing mainstream Post 16 education and,
- To introduce a Personal Travel Budget (PTB), a bus pass or a parental contribution to the transport required for Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) 16 years to 25 years travel.

Therefore families with a young person over the age of 16 would be responsible for arranging their own transport to and from their child's place of education, this would be instead of a bus provided by Swindon Borough Council or a vehicle coming to collect them each day.

If approved, in July the Education Transport Policy would be adopted and implemented for pupils starting post 16 education in September 2018.

A consultation with parents, local schools and other stakeholders to understand any specific concerns, or how they might be affected by future changes was opened on the 17th May 2017, closing on 28th June 2017.

Promotion and Distribution

The consultation was advertised through the Council website as an online link, and also by the provision of paper self-completion questionnaires on request. The consultation was also promoted at through schools across the Borough, during May and June 2017.

Response

A total of 245 valid responses have been included in this analysis.

An accurate response rate is difficult to define because we cannot know how many people had the opportunity to respond but decided not to do so. We can reasonably assume, though, because of the methodology used, that most respondents have an active interest in the subject, and indeed the respondent profile confirms that most respondents are parents/carers of a child/children of secondary school age.

The data has been analysed using SPSS, an industry standard analysis application, supplemented by text analysis techniques for open text responses. No data weightings have been applied to any of the results. Not everyone answered every question, so the total number of responses for each question is shown as part of the data analysis.

Guarantees of anonymity have been given to respondents, and care has been taken not to use any information provided in such a way as to allow a respondent to be identified from the data they supply. This includes the suppression of results where they are below 0.5%; these results are instead indicated with an asterisk (*).

2.0 Respondent Profile

2.1 Nature of interest in the consultation

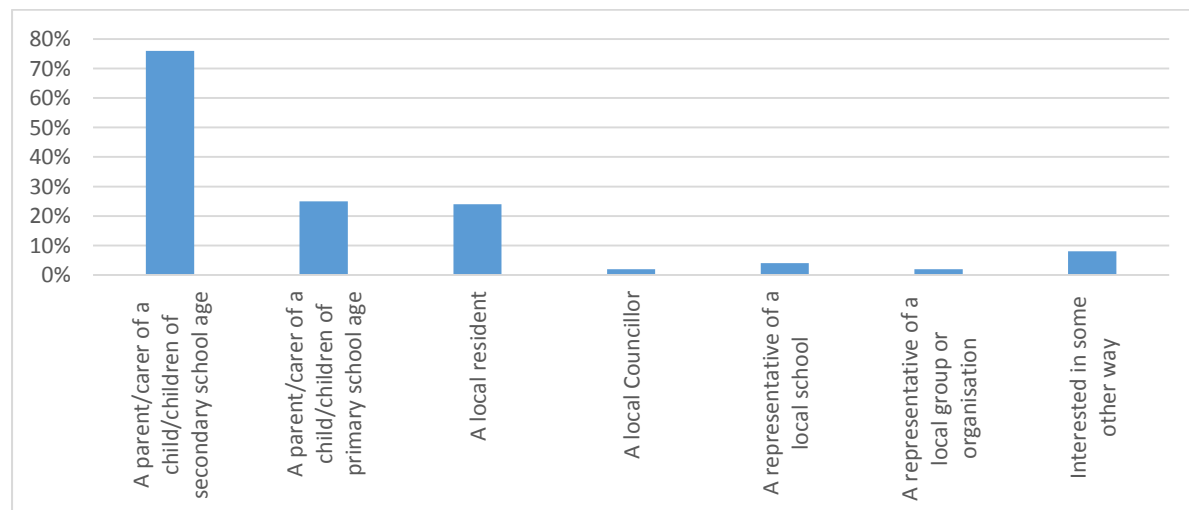
Respondents were invited to indicate the nature of their interest in the consultation, and respond as follows:

Table 1: Nature of interest in Post 16 Travel Consultation

Interest	Proportion of respondents
A parent/carer of a child/children of secondary school age	76%
A parent/carer of a child/children of primary school age	24%
A local resident	24%
A local Councillor	2%
A representative of a local school	4%
A representative of a local group or organisation	2%
Interested in some other way	8%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	245

+ Multiple answers were invited for this question so percentages will not sum to 100%

Chart 1: Nature of interest in Post 16 Travel consultation



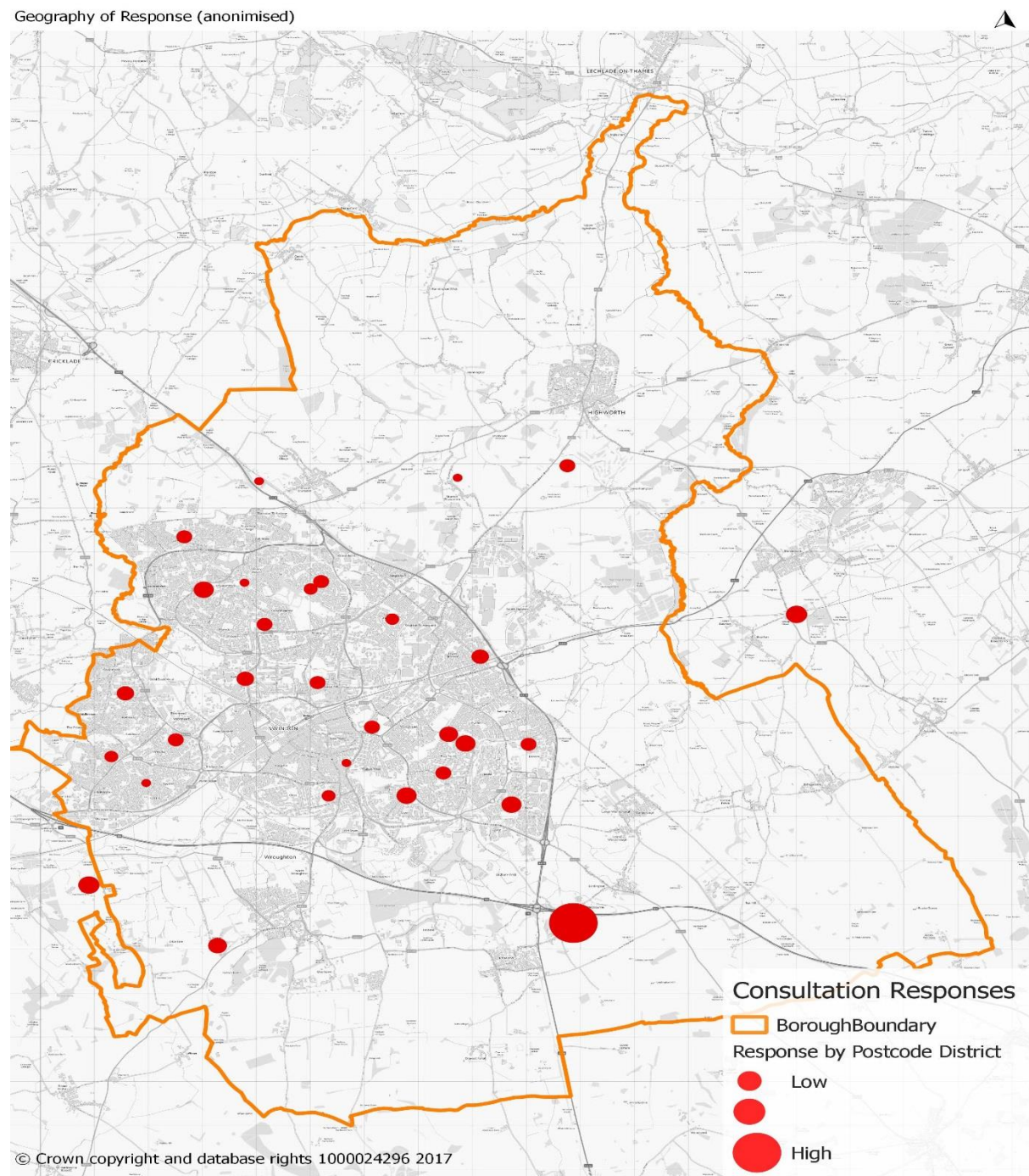
Three quarters of respondents identify themselves as a parent/carer of a child/children of secondary school age, and a quarter are a parent/carer of a child/children of primary school age. Only one quarter identify themselves as Swindon residents but as the map below illustrates the pattern of response is from all over Swindon, as well as from more outlying areas.

Other groups are much less well represented in the survey, local Councillors, representatives of local schools or grouped are all present but in nothing like the same proportions. Those who indicated an interest in the survey in other ways were students themselves, parents of sixth form students, or teachers/individuals working in a role with young people.

2.2 Geography

Respondents were asked to supply a postcode, and those who gave enough information in this respect (170 respondents) have been included in the map below. The dots are located in the central point of the postcode district. The size of the dot reflects the number of responses for that postcode area

Map 1: Geography of response



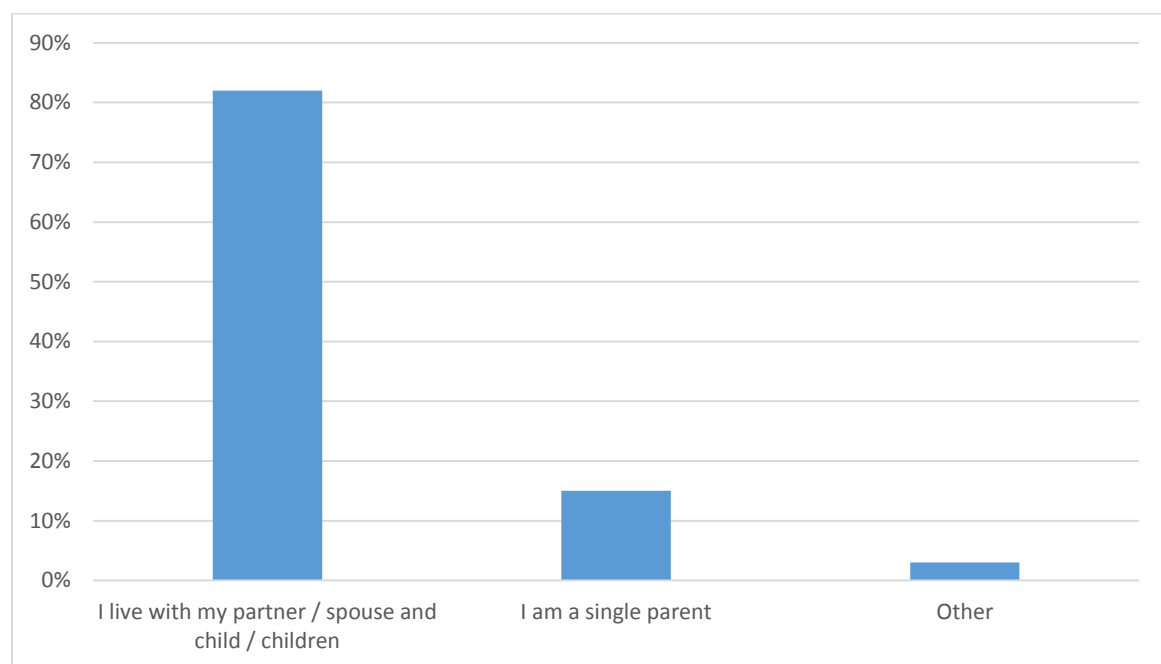
There are responses from across the Borough is also but the response is especially concentrated in the south and south east of the Borough, particularly the Chiseldon, Wroughton, Wanborough and Bishopstone areas. There are fewer responses in the North postal district including Highworth.

2.3 Household Structure

Table 2: Which of these best describes your household?

	Proportion of respondents
I live with my partner / spouse and child / children	82%
I am a single parent	15%
Other	3%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>164</i>

Chart 2: Which of these best describes your household?



Over four fifths of respondents were living with a partner and their child or children, 15% were single parents. Other households were those living with parents or other extended family units.

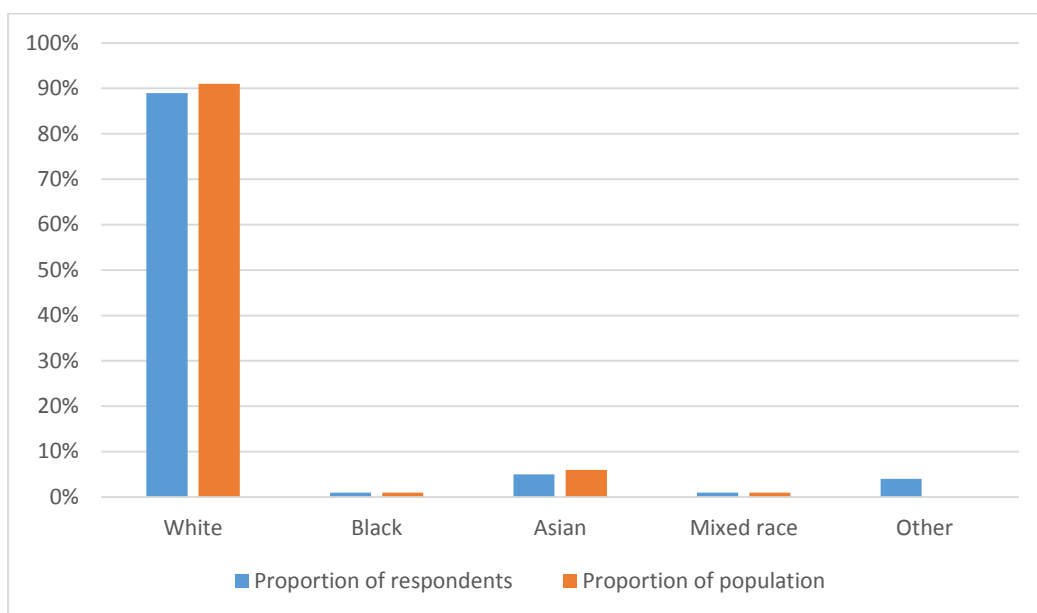
2.4 Ethnicity

Ethnic group as indicated by respondents is shown here:

Table 3: Respondent ethnicity

Ethnicity	Proportion of respondents	Proportion of population ¹
White	92%	91%
Black	*	1%
Asian	5%	6%
Mixed race	1%	1%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	154	162,633

Chart 3: Respondent ethnicity



Of those respondents who answered this question the response broadly follows that of the adult Swindon population recorded at the 2011 Census. However it should be noted that over one third of respondents did not answer this question so it is not possible to reflect an accurate profile of the sample.

¹ All population data in this chapter are drawn from Neighbourhood Statistics, 2011 Census, for the Borough of Swindon.

2.5 Working status

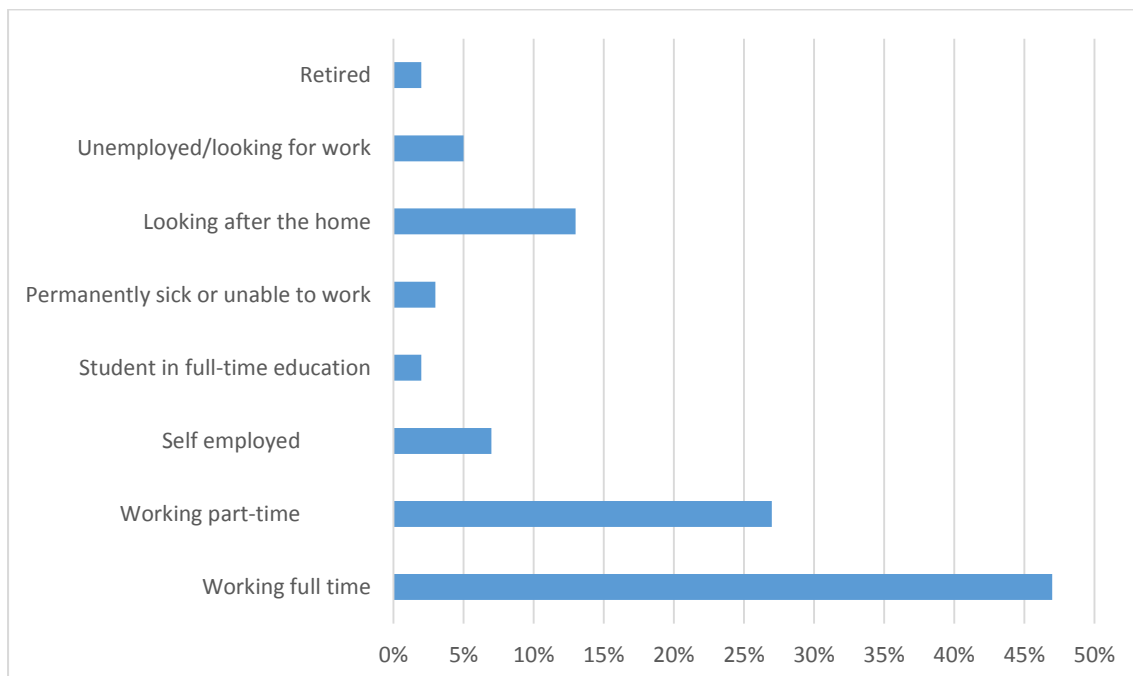
The working status of respondents is shown in this table:

Table 4: Working status

Employment status	Proportion of respondents
Working full time	47%
Working part-time	27%
Self employed	7%
Student in full-time education	2%
Permanently sick or unable to work	3%
Looking after the home	13%
Unemployed/looking for work	5%
Retired	2%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>164</i>

+ Multiple answers were invited for this question so percentages will not sum to 100%

Chart 4: Respondent working status



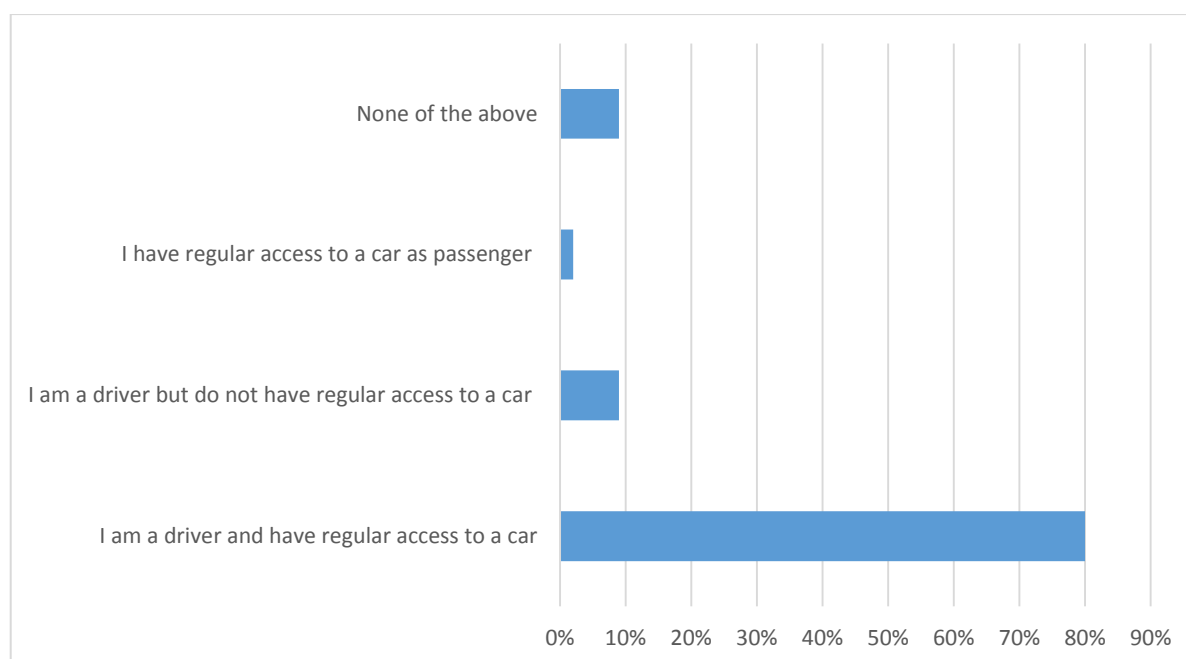
Four fifths of respondents to the survey are working in some form; over two fifths work full-time, and one quarter part-time, with a small group of self-employed people making this group add up to 81% of respondents. This reflects a respondent profile of adults with young and older children; there are very few retirees in the sample.

2.6: Transport

Table 5: Access to use of a car

	Proportion of respondents
I am a driver and have regular access to a car	80%
I am a driver but do not have regular access to a car	9%
I have regular access to a car as passenger	2%
None of the above	9%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	163

Chart 5: Access to use of a car



Four fifths of respondents have access to a private car, either as a driver or passenger, one in five respondents has none of these.

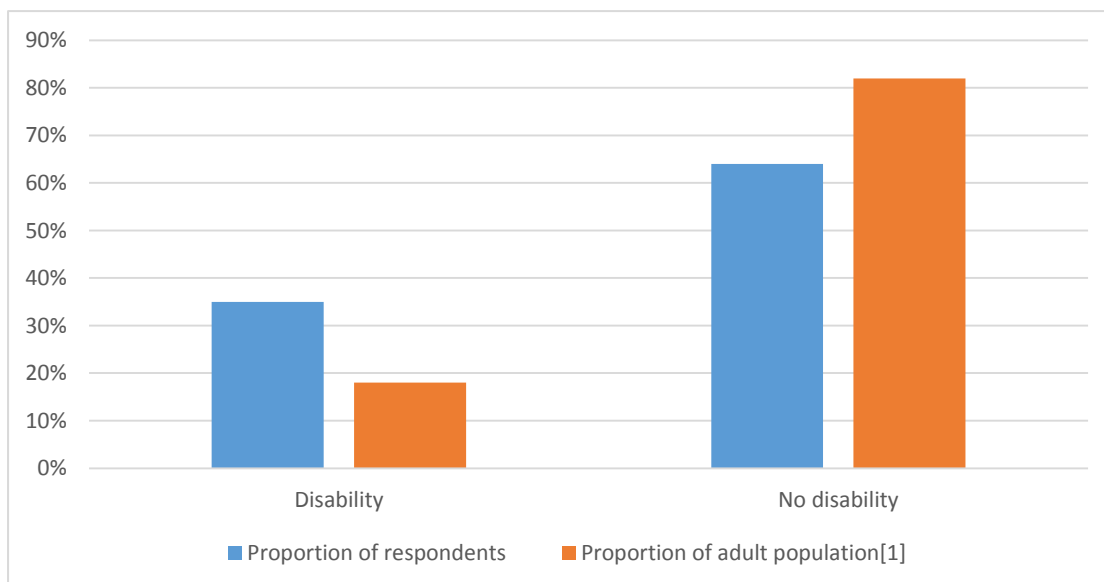
2.7 Disability

Levels of disability in the response are shown in this table:

Table 6: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

	Proportion of respondents	Proportion of adult population ²
Disability	30%	18%
No disability	75%	82%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>152</i>	<i>167,744</i>

Chart 6: Respondent disability



A third of respondents identify themselves as having some form of disability. This is higher than would be expected from the general population data, and is notable given the younger profile of the response. However over a third of respondents did not answer this question, so it whilst it is likely that those with a disability are more likely to have provided an answer to the question, it may not be a fully accurate picture of the sample.

² The Swindon adult population base used here is aged 16 plus, this column actually includes 16 and 17 year olds as well as adults, hence the slightly higher base number than in other comparisons we have made. Also the 2011 Census question asked about 'long-term health problem or disability' which limits day to day activities' so is used as a proxy rather than direct comparison.

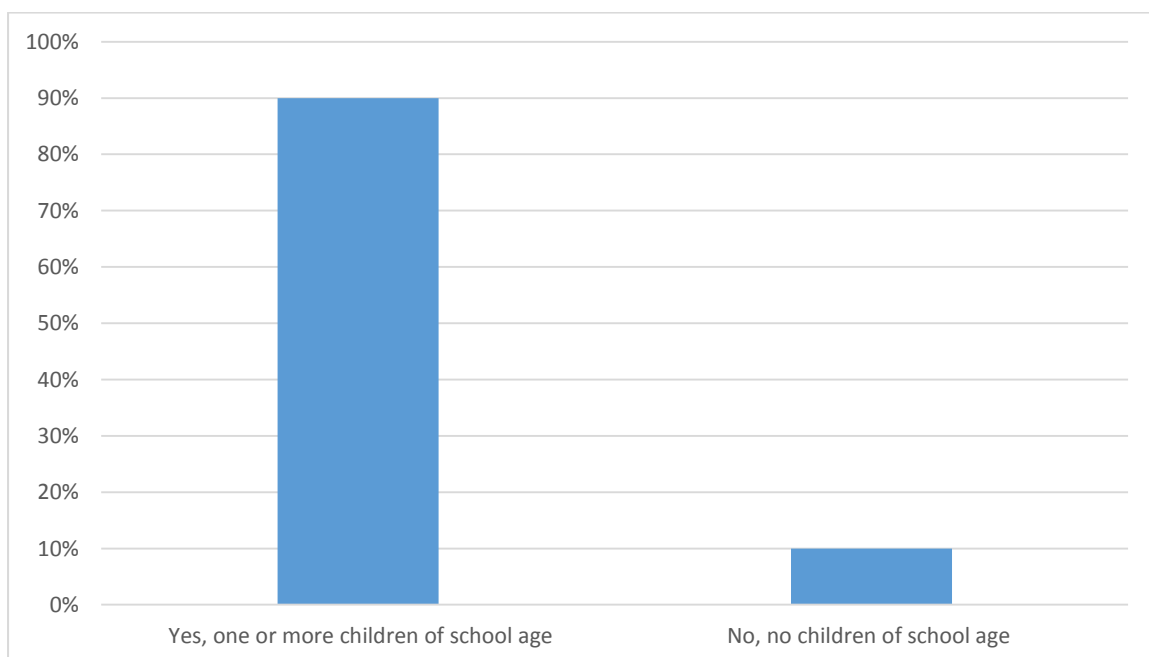
2.8 School age children of respondents

Respondents were asked if they had any children of school age living at home with them. The results are shown here:

Table 7: Do you have any children of school age, living at home with you?

	Proportion of respondents
Yes, one or more children of school age	90%
No, no children of school age	10%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	238

Chart 7: Do you have any children of school age, living at home with you?



Nine in ten respondents to the consultation have one or more children living at home with them, a small number of respondents do not.

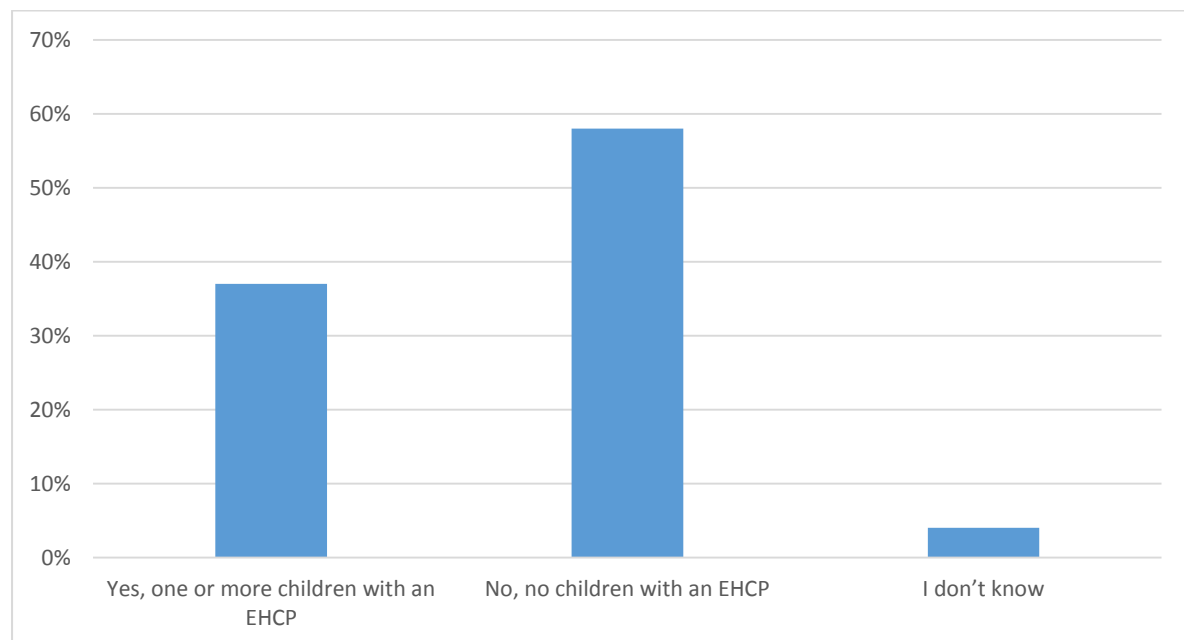
2.9 Children with an Education Health and Care Plan.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had any children with or awaiting an assessment for an Education Health and Care Plan. The answers to this question are shown below.

Table 8: Do you have a child/children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or awaiting assessment, living at home with you?

	<i>Proportion of respondents with children of school age living at home</i>
Yes, one or more children with an EHCP	37%
No, no children with an EHCP	58%
I don't know	4%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	219

Chart 8: Do you have a child/children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or awaiting assessment, living at home with you?



Almost three fifths of respondents did not have children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) living at home with them. Over a third had a child or children with an EHCP, just a small number were not sure of the answer to this question.

2.10 Respondent ages of children and schools attended

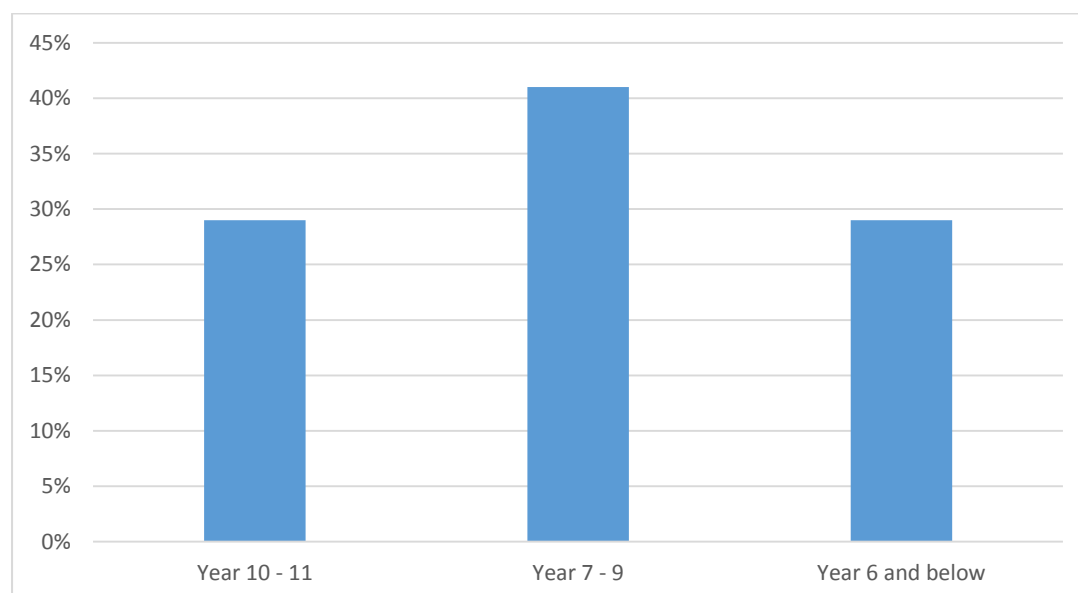
Respondents were also asked the current year group of school age children living at home with them. The results are shown here:

Table 9: Respondent children: by year group

Year group	Percentage of children in the sample %
Year 10 - 11	29%
Year 7 - 9	41%
Year 6 and below	29%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>350</i>

Almost a third of children of respondents are in years 10 -11 and two fifths years 7- 9. A significant proportion of respondents also have children in years 6, and below although the majority of these (85%) are siblings of older children.

Chart 9: Respondent children: by year group



Almost a third of children of respondents are in years 10 -11 and two fifths years 7- 9. A significant proportion of respondents also have children in years 6, and below although the majority of these (85%) are siblings of older children.

2.1: Schools currently attended

Table 10: Schools currently attended

This table shows the schools attended by children of respondents in the sample.

School currently attended	Percentage of children in the sample
A local primary school	19%
St Luke's	*
Uplands	8%
Brimble Hill	1%
The Chalet	1%
Crowdy's School	4%
Commonweal	1%
Warneford	1%
Isambard	1%
Kingsdown	1%
Nova Hreod	*
Lydiard Park	1%
Ridgeway	45%
Swindon Academy	2%
St Joseph's	1%
Swindon UTC	1%
A school outside Swindon	4%
Other	11%

Special schools across Swindon are represented in the response with the biggest number of children in the sample attending Uplands school.

In terms of other schools, the greatest response is from parents/carers who have children attending Ridgeway School; this group represents 45% of all children in the sample. This is consistent with the pattern of responses shown in Map 1 where higher numbers are from postcode areas closest to Ridgeway School.

3.0 Comments and Observations

Three opportunities were provided in the questionnaire for people to respond, in a free-text format, to questions about the proposals regarding subsidised travel for post 16 education. A number of people took the opportunity to express their opinions on these matters, and raised a variety of observations - some brief, some lengthy and detailed - covering a fairly wide range of issues that are of importance to them. These comments have been grouped into broad thematic areas to which they relate.

In this analysis, each comment is broken down into its component parts; some comments make a single observation, and are counted once, while other more wide-ranging comments may appear multiple times in the analysis, although only once in respect of each theme they cover.

3.1 Views on the proposal to remove automatic discretionary subsidised support for pupils accessing mainstream Post 16 education

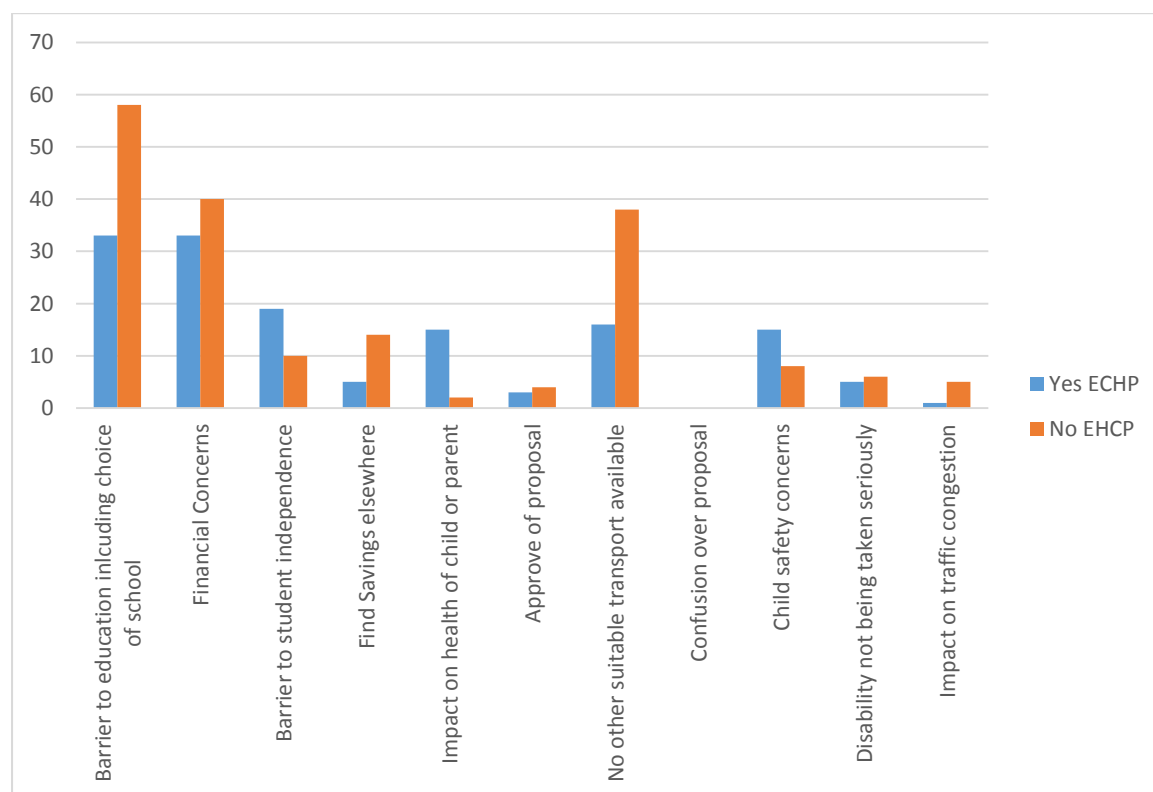
The first of these questions invited respondents to comment on proposal to remove automatic discretionary subsidised support for pupils accessing mainstream Post 16 education, which was described in detail in the questionnaire. However this question also elicited views on the second proposal - to introduce a Personal Travel Budget (PTB), a bus pass or a parental contribution to the transport required for Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) travel.

All of the comments made in answer to this question are reflected in the table and chart below. The table provides a summary of all responses, and the chart compares the frequency of comments by parents/carers who have children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those with no EHCP.

Table 11: Views on the proposal to remove automatic discretionary subsidised support for pupils accessing mainstream Post 16 education

Theme	No. of comments	Proportion of those respondents who made a comment
Barrier to education including choice of school	103	27.3%
Financial Concerns	83	22.0%
Barrier to student independence	35	9.3%
Find Savings elsewhere	22	5.8%
Impact on health of child or parent	18	4.8%
No other suitable transport available	61	16.2%
Confusion over proposal	2	0.5%
Child safety concerns	25	6.6%
Disability not being taken seriously	12	3.2%
Impact on traffic congestion	8	2.1%
Approve of proposal	8	2.1%
Total no. of people making comment	377	

Chart 10: Views on the proposal to remove automatic discretionary subsidised support for pupils accessing mainstream Post 16 education



The most prominent issue raised by respondents is that the proposal will create a barrier to young people wishing to access post 16 education, Some also comment that it is government policy for children to study post aged 16 and that the proposal will have the effect of limiting choice and educational decisions for their children. In line with this the mainstream responses, predominantly from the Ridgeway highlight no other suitable transport available as a major issue.

Financial concerns also feature highly and are closely linked to concerns about the potential financial impacts of the proposals on families. There is concern that the proposals impacts adversely on those who are less well off, and they question the withdrawal of services that are intended to facilitate increased the life chances of disadvantaged young people.

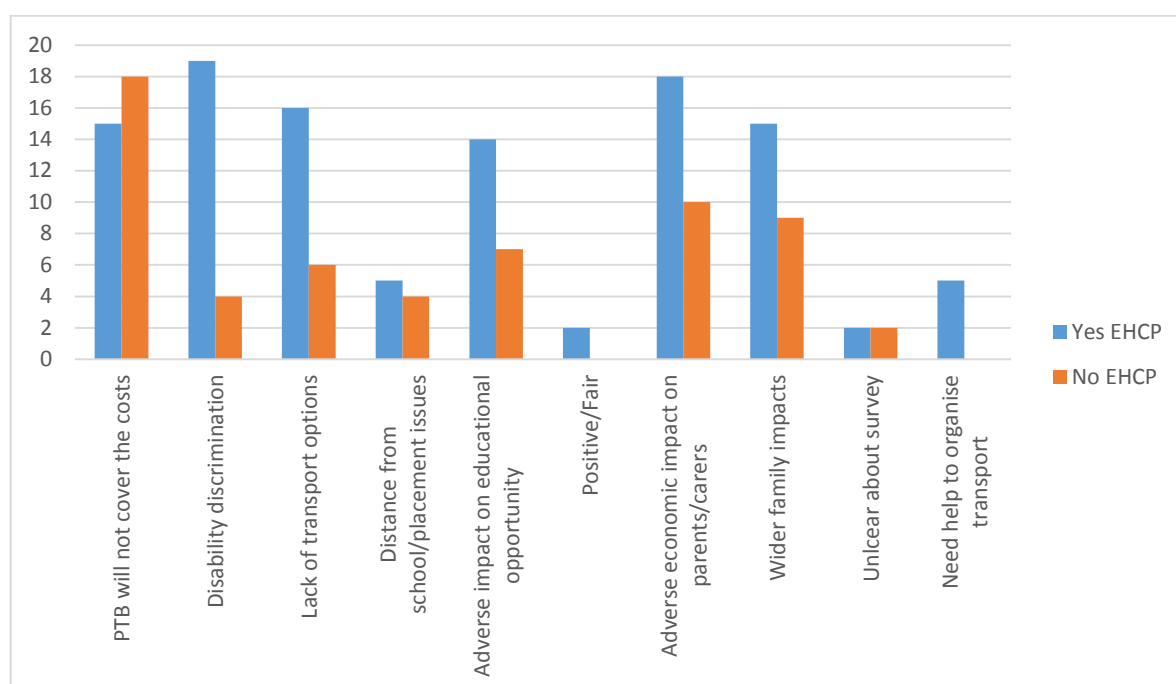
3.2 Advantages and disadvantages of a Personal Travel Budget

Respondents were asked to identify what they see as the advantages and disadvantages of this model, and the results are summarised in the table and chart below.

Table 12: Views on the proposal to introduce Personal Travel Budgets

Theme	No. of comments	Proportion of those respondents who made a comment
PTB will not cover the costs	36	15.7%
Disability discrimination	37	16.2%
Lack of transport options	31	13.5%
Distance from school/placement issues	9	3.9%
Adverse impact on educational opportunity	32	14.0%
Positive/Fair	5	2.1%
Adverse economic impact on parents/carers	35	15.3%
Wider family impacts	31	13.5%
Unclear about survey	6	2.6%
Need help to organise transport	7	3.1%
Total no. of people making comment	229	

Chart 12: Views on the proposal to introduce Personal Travel Budgets



Overview

The most prominent issue raised by respondents is that the view that the PTB will not cover the cost of travel to school, some also comment that it is the proposal is discriminatory, but that is due to an understanding that the PTB will be the only option, rather than an offer. A number of these highlight the information available on PTBs is lacking and would need to be made clearer if the proposals are approved.

Financial concerns again feature highly and are closely linked to concerns about the potential financial impacts of the proposals on families.

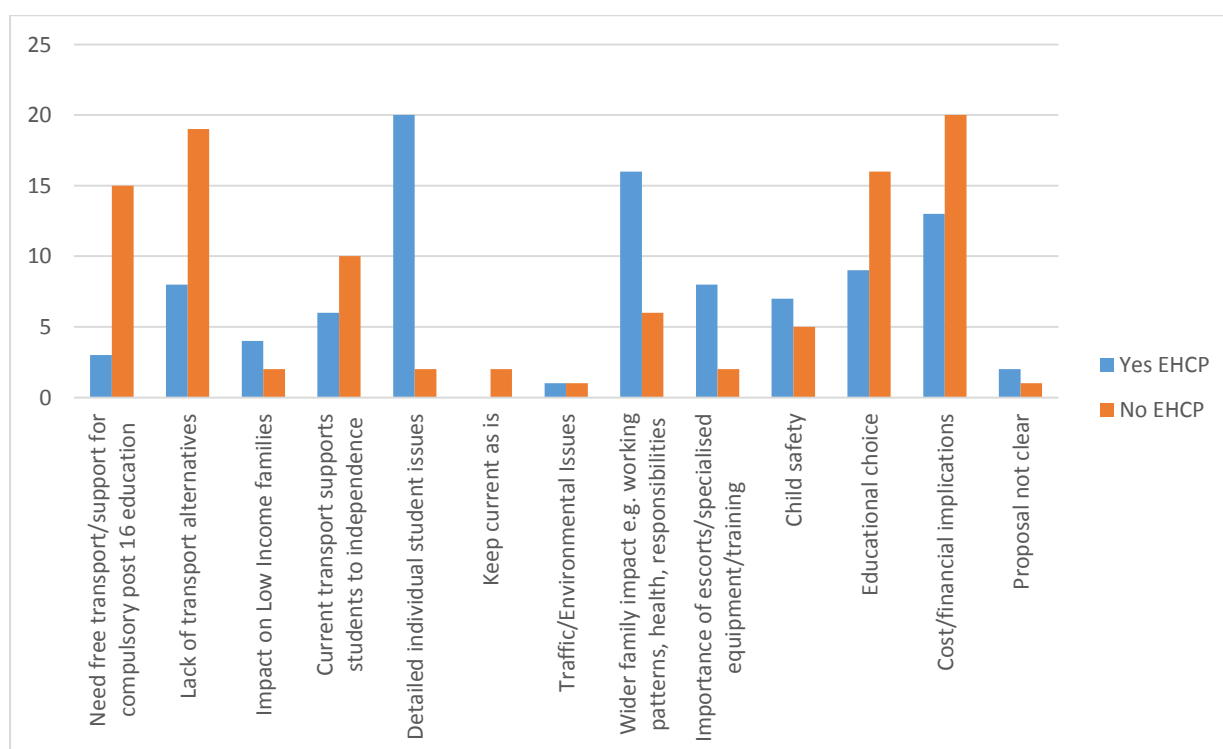
3.3 Issues for the Council to consider

Respondents were asked to identify what they think are the most important issues the Council should consider when determining decisions about support for pupils with transport assistance for post-16 education. The answers they gave are summarised in this table.

Table 21: Respondent comments on most important issues for the Council to consider

Theme	No. of comments	Proportion of those respondents who made a comment
Need free transport/support for compulsory post 16 education	19	7.9%
Lack of transport alternatives	34	14.2%
Impact on Low Income families	8	3.3%
Current transport supports students to independence	18	7.5%
Detailed individual student issues	27	11.3%
Keep current as is	4	1.7%
Traffic/Environmental Issues	7	2.9%
Wider family impact e.g. working patterns, health, responsibilities	27	11.2%
Importance of escorts/specialised equipment/training	12	5.0%
Child safety	15	6.3%
Educational choice	31	12.9%
Cost/financial implications	35	14.6%
Proposal not clear	3	1.3%

Chart 17: Respondent comments on most important issues for the Council to consider



Overview

The most prominent issue raised by respondents is that the proposal will have cost/financial implications for families and would impact on educational choice, especially in the mainstream proposal. Again, the lack of transport alternatives around to the Ridgeway area was an issue. Around the SEND proposal the prominent issues were the proposals should consider the individual needs of students and the impact on working patterns and family life.